

# GREENWAY COMMISSION MEETING



August 9, 2012

3:30-5:00 pm

First Floor Conference Room City Hall

**Members Present:** Jim Grode, Chairman, Marcia Bromberg, Vice-Chairman, Glen Locascio, Stephen Jones, Ally Donlan Wilson, Mary Weber, Sue Barlow, Chris Pelly, Council Liaison

**Staff Present:** Ken Putnam, Director, Transportation Department, Martha McGlohon, Legal Liaison, Al Kopf, Parks & Recreation, Blake Esselstyn, Planning & Development, Barb Mee, Transportation Planner, Janet Georgemurr, Transportation Department, Brian Ester, Engineering Department, Greg Shuler, Engineering Department, John Gavin, Engineering Department.

Community Present: None

Speaker: Don Kostelec of Kostelec Planning LLC

Jim called the meeting to order at 3:30.

Introduction of the Greenway Commission and City Staff as stated above.

**Review and approval of 8-9-12 agenda:** Jim Grode added to the agenda the Bike and Ped Task Force Update. Stephen Jones moved to approve the agenda, Marcia Bromberg seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Review and approval of 7-12-12:** Stephen Jones moved to approve the minutes as written, Marcia seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

## **New Business:**

- **Parking for Boards and Commissions:** - Ken stated that earlier this year new security passes were distributed to the employees for access to various employee parking lots. Parking passes were distributed to the Greenway Commissioners to the lower lot off of Valley and Marjorie Streets.
- **Wild Cherry Bridge Design:** Greg Shuler, Streets and Engineering Manager explained the condition of the bridge.
  - ❑ The Wild Cherry Bridge needed repairs or replacement. Engineering did a cost benefit analysis and the most effective was to replace the bridge. Engineering spoke with Transportation and the consultants that designed the bridge to include a pedestrian access on the bridge.
  - ❑ The bridge deck is approximately \$200 per square foot; therefore, Engineering was looking at this as more of a sidewalk rather than a greenway. The new bridge is two feet wider.
  - ❑ After the project was awarded the contractor said that the bridge could be built faster if a temporary bridge was built during construction in order to maximize access across the creek. In order to do that Engineering had to work with the property owners for more easements.
  - ❑ Greg anticipates that the construction will start this calendar year.
  - ❑ The new bridge is being modeled from the existing bridge.
  - ❑ Next Tuesday, Greg will go to Council for the approval to obtain real property fee simple for the rest of the easement that is required.

- ❑ Greg stated that the Greenway Commission could call him, Brian Estes, John Gavin or Ken Putnam for further information.

● **Don Kostelec - Presentation on Buncombe County Greenway Master Plan:** Introduced himself as the consultant and project manager for the Buncombe County Greenways and Trails Master Plan.

- ❑ Don presented a background of the County Greenway Master Plan.
- ❑ Don described the priority corridors, which are not in any priority order:
  1. Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Corridor
  2. US 70 Swannanoa River corridor
  3. NC251/ French Broad River to the Madison County line.
  4. Bent Creek Greenway Corridors starting at the end point of the existing French Board River Greenway at Hominy Creek.
  5. Hominy Creek Greenway
  6. Lake Julian
  7. Reems Creek/Weaverville Greenway Corridor
  8. Reynolds Greenway

10 Action Items:

1. Secure local funding commitments;
2. Identify strategic grant opportunities;
3. Cultivate existing partnerships and identify new partners;
4. Create a landowner outreach program;
5. Pursue conversation via ordinances and alliances;
6. Amend ordinances to support greenways;
7. Conduct detailed plans for priority corridors;
8. Develop Standards & Specifications for greenways;
9. Organize a greenways training program;
10. Evaluate performance.

Don stated that there were approximately 200 volunteer hours by the Buncombe County Greenway commissioners and the County staff that planned much of the substance. Don estimates if a consultant had to charge for this much time the cost would be approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000.

Marcia stated that the Wilma Dykeman is the heart of the plan and is important to keep in mind as we move forward about where that stands and how it hooks everything together.

Don stated that the full draft plan will be online soon on Connect Buncombe Website and will use much of the outreach mechanisms that have been done with the "Greenways Please" campaign and the list from the survey to reconnect with the people who have been involved.

● **Reappointment of Marcia Bromberg to the Buncombe Greenway Commission:** Sue Barlow made the motion to reappoint Marcia to the Buncombe County Greenway; Stephen seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Glen stated that he appreciates all of the work that Marcia has contributed.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

● **Resolution - fast track option:** Marcia stated that in a community session a year ago questions were asked about a set of projects to look at the greenway plan as it existed. Al did a masterful job in getting the maps where people could write and/or draw on the maps. The public came up with a list of projects that are not in the current Parks & Recreation Master Plan which are desirable for the people in the City. One or more had previously been listed as greenway plans but somehow disappeared in transition from a greenway to a recreation department master plan. The GC are looking for ways to include the projects in the existing master plan as an amendment or be recognized if funding or opportunities becomes available; and also to relook at the priority list that exists to see if they fit into a higher priority level based upon public interest.

After a lengthy discussion:

- ❑ Councilman Pelly and Ken suggested going to Council's Planning and Economic Development Committee, making the case of why a revised and updated master plan is needed; and is reasonable that GC consider getting this issue on the agenda of the Planning and Economic Development in making the case there and getting direction on how to use the process to update the master plan.
- ❑ Councilman Pelly stated that the Planning and Economic Development Chair is Esther Manheimer; also on the committee is Councilmen Jan Davis and Marc Hunt. The committee meets the third Tuesday of every month at 3:30pm in the First Floor Conference Room.
- ❑ Call Janet Dack who is the staff contact 232-4505 to be placed on the agenda. Chris suggested calling Esther or Marc. Ken stated that the earliest would be September's agenda.
- ❑ Jim will draft the list of rationale that GC has come up with and whether we put it in a resolution or as a briefing document to present to the Planning and Economic Development Committee. In preparing the list into the strongest terms in order to be ready for the sub-committee; then ultimately to City Council to make a stronger case for why this plan needs to be opened up.
- ❑ Stephen suggests using bullet points, readable lay language with a historical view.
- ❑ Councilman Pelly stated that one of the benefits of the sub-committee process is that Jim Grode, Chairman, will receive feedback on how to tighten the GC case and to take that step rather than going directly to Council.
- ❑ Jim will draft and solicit input from Glen and Marcia since they were on GC at the time that the first plan was presented. Draft to Glen and Marcia and then will send out to the whole GC.
- ❑ Blake Esselstyn stated that the priority corridors in the current Greenways Master Plan have parcel-level alignments associated with them in GIS, and that the commission might consider that adding corridors should include more than a new sentence in the text and a new generalized line on the city-wide maps. Numerous hours went into scouting the existing priority routes to understand and indicate the best location (e.g., which side of road or creek, and how far away). Planners and other staff rely on the detailed mapping to understand whether a given parcel is affected by the master plan. He feels the absence of well-delineated routes was a weakness of the previous master plan.

❑ **Greenway Commission Updates:**

1. **Community Outreach Committee Report:** Sue reported on the 9/8/12 ribbon cutting.
  - Sue met with Eblen Short Stop who will allow parking and will provide water.
  - Staff will help with invitations.
  - Blue Ridge Bicycle club has planned a novice bike ride at Carrier Park to arrive for the ribbon cutting.
  - Sue encourages GC to send names to her of other invitees.
  - Marcia will solicit Connect with Buncombe and Asheville on Bikes.
  - Councilman Pelly reported a good article regarding the ribbon cutting in the Montford newsletter.
  - There will be a presentation of the check and then honor some of the people that were involved.
2. **Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation Report** - Glen reported that the Foundation did not meet in July. Glen announced a Foundation fund raising event of "Dancing with the Stars" on 10/20/12.
3. **Buncombe County Greenway Commission Update** - The Commission plans to have an ending event for the master plan when the County Commission receives the final report of the master plan.
4. **Friends of the Hominy Creek** are still working hard and planning to do a proposal about releasing the property of Hominy Creek Greenway from the City to manage and maintain it over a period of time and working directly with Marsha Stickford, Neighborhood Coordinator for the City.
5. **Bike and Ped Task Force Report** - Jim reported that the discussion was about the Transit Plan roll out; Bike Friendly status designation and feedback on how to move up the distinction for next year.

## **STAFF UPDATES:**

- **PRCA Staff Update:** Al Kopf reported:
  1. Beaucatcher Greenway - Al reported that there were RFP interviews and the final decision was to select Stewart Engineering and staff is now in the process of negotiating a contract with them. A tentative date of 8/28/12 is set to present the contract to City Council. Marcia asked about the residents of Ardmion Park - Al stated that the legal staff is working with their attorney and have been getting subsequent emails from the citizens. Stephen asked if this would be a confrontational situation with Council or does Al see any resolution from the situation of last month. Al stated that the City's legal staff is working with the residents. Martha stated that the residents of Ardmion Park have their position and the City has its position as it pertains to ownership of the road. Martha stated that there is another City attorney handling this matter. Al stated that the project will be a fairly long corridor and the conflict area is only a portion. Al is hopeful to proceed with a contract and move forward and that this issue will be resolved while in the design process.
  2. Clingman Forest and Town Branch Greenway for the Tiger grant, interviews were conducted with potential consultants and 3 great firms came in for interviews and a finalist was selected. Al followed up on the references and all were excellent; Al submitted emails to the two firms that were not finalists and to the finalist that was selected. Al feels comfortable in choosing Site Work Studios as the finalist. They have two other firms that are sub-contractors, Baker Engineering, who does great environmental work along with greenway work and Don Kostelec.
- **Transportation Update:** Ken Putnam stated that since Mariate is not here Ken does not have anything further to add.
- **Planning:** Blake reported that the Asheville Downtown Association did a study of walkability of the downtown area and will be presenting to the Downtown Commission on 8/10 at 8:30pm in the First Floor Conference Room at City Hall.  
Blake stated that he saw through a planning mailing that NCDOT is starting to gather information about bike and pedestrian planning state-wide.
- **Announcements:** Jim announced that the next meeting is the work session on 9/13/12 from 1-5pm in the Human Resources Training Room at City Hall and materials will be sent to Greenway Commission prior to the work session to prepare. Jim and Marcia will meet with Mariate and the facilitator.

Jim adjourned the meeting at 5:01 p.m.